



# NEWS RELEASE

## HOWARD COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF POLICE OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

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### **Police sergeant aids child in swift water rescue**

A Howard County police sergeant helped rescue a girl who was in distress in the Little Patuxent River near the Savage Mill Trail over the weekend.

On May 25, around 4:15 p.m., Sgt. Michael Johnson, a 16-year HCPD veteran, was on a foot patrol with a park ranger when he heard a girl screaming near the Little Patuxent River. Sgt. Johnson ran in the direction of the screams and saw a 9-year-old girl in shoulder-deep water being swept down the river by the current.

Sgt. Johnson notified police dispatch and requested Howard County Department of Fire and Rescue Services respond for a swift water rescue.

The girl yelled that her foot was trapped under a rock. Seeing her struggle to keep her head above water, Sgt. Johnson jumped into the river. As he was swimming toward her, he was picked up by the current, but was able to grab onto a crate that was jammed between some rocks. Sgt. Johnson pulled himself in front of the crate to avoid being dragged down the river. He lunged toward the girl and freed her trapped foot, then pulled her to the edge of the water where a bystander helped her onto the river bank.

“This is an example of the ways in which our officers put their lives on the line every day,” said Police Chief William J. McMahon. “We are very proud of Sgt. Johnson for all that he did to ensure this situation had a good outcome.”

As summer gets underway, officials from Howard County Recreation & Parks stress that swimming is not allowed in any county park. Signs are posted and include symbols to eliminate language barriers. Open water swimming poses different risks than pool swimming and should be considered highly dangerous because of limited visibility, tidal action and fluctuations in water depth and temperature.

If you see someone fall into the water:

- Call 9-1-1 immediately.
- Give accurate information about where you saw the victim go in, what the victim was wearing and any notable landmarks you see.
- Do not attach anything to yourself and toss it to a victim in the water. You will be pulled in by the force of the current.

The Howard County Police Department, Howard County Department of Fire and Rescue Services and Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks wish everyone a safe summer.

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